

The Pocahontas Times.

Andrew & Norman Price, Owners.

"Montani Semper Liberi"

Andrew Price, Editor

VOL. 16, NO. 19

MARLINTON, WEST VIRGINIA, DECEMBER 1, 1898.

\$1.00 PER YEAR

HISTORICAL OUTLINE.

Memorabilia of Huntersville and Organization of the County.

PART II.

During the war Huntersville was burned by Federal troops sent in from the Union garrison at Beverly so as to prevent its being a Confederate depot for military supplies. When peace was restored between the States, Huntersville recuperated rapidly. Flourishing stores were carried on by Amos Barlow and J. C. Loury & Son, the farms reenclosed, improved methods of agriculture adopted, and at this time presents a more attractive appearance than at any time in all its previous history.

The more notable days in the history of Huntersville and of the county citizenship were the trainings and the general muster that would follow. For several years after the organization of the 127th Regiment the Brigade Inspector was Major John Alexander of Lexington. He would bring his drummer and fifer with him, two likely colored men uniformed in scarlet, like British soldiers, and were the admiration and envy of all the colored people. Some of the colored boys would say that they could desire no better heaven than to be musicians and wear such red clothes.

When the militia regulations were modified the Colonel of the Regiment would train the officers for about three consecutive days before the Regimental Muster. These were usually seasons of much social hilarity, and the saloons reaped lucrative returns. The Musters came off in May, just after corn planting. More animated scenes were never witnessed in our county as the throngs passed into Huntersville from all sections. The song, the laugh, the jest enlivened the hotels. The street was thronged with crowds, passing and repassing.

About 11 o'clock the long-roll of the drum was heard, the Colonel and his staff appeared at the head of the street, and paraded the street preceded by drum and fife. On their return, the Colonel instructed the Adjutant to have the Regiment formed. The Colonel and staff would then disappear, and retire to headquarters. In the meantime the loud orders of the Captains were heard, for their men to fall into ranks, and when formed, the Adjutant placed them in position, and then reported to the Colonel that all was in readiness. The Colonel and staff reappeared at the head of the Regiment. Three beautiful silken flags were put in charge of the color guard. The rear rank of the Regiment fell back a few paces in open order. A procession, formed of the Colonel's staff and color-guard, preceded by the band, reviewed the Regiment, stationed by the flags, and returned to the head of the Regiment. In stentorian tones, the order was given to close ranks and form a column of two, and soon the whole Regiment would be on the march for a neighboring field, selected for the evolutions. The field just west of the town was frequently selected, and the one back of the court-house was sometimes used. Two or three hours would be passed in the evolutions. The bugle would sound the retreat, the drum and fife take up "Bonaparte's Retreat from Moscow," and the whole column would prepare to leave the field and fall back on Huntersville in slow and regular order. Having formed in open order on the street the Colonel and staff, preceded by the music, had another procession to collect the flags. The color-guard was led to the head of the column, the Colonel dismounted, received the flags one by one, and each was saluted by the roll of the drum, and placed away for safe keeping.

After this the Regiment was disbanded, and then came the funny scenes that would require a very graphic pen to describe with due justice. Cakes, beer and something stronger were now in profuse requisition. The sun would sometimes go down, leaving a large crowd enjoying the hilarity of the occasion, seemingly sorry that muster day did not last a week, at

least. "Tomorrow is Sunday and there is no use in being in a hurry to get home. Let us go it while we are here and have a chance," were some of the communications that were quite a strain to good morals.

Among the distinguished citizens of the county who were Colonels of this Regiment appear the names of John Baxter, Benjamin Tallman, John Hill, Paul McNeil, D. W. Kerr, James Tallman, W. T. Gammon, James T. Lockridge, David W. Kerr yet lives (1898,) and is the only survivor.

The next notable days were the Superior Court terms, when lawyers and Judges from abroad would be present and hold the courts with marked dignity, being out of reach of the voters and asked nobody any favors. Their decisions were above suspicion, and but few cases were ever appealed. Such as were appealed never amounted to anything very encouraging.

The Circuit Judges in the order named were Judge Taylor, of Lexington; J. J. Allen, of Fincastle; Judge Johnson, also of Fincastle, who died while attending court in Huntersville; Judge Harrison, Union; Judges Holt and McWhorter, Lewisburg, and Judge Campbell, of Union.

The Clerks of Pocahontas have been John Baxter, pro tem, Josiah Beard, H. M. Moffett, James Tallman, General William Skeene, William Curry, Robert Gay, and John J. Beard. The foregoing held both of the offices at the same time. A few years since the offices were divided and J. H. Patterson became Circuit Clerk and S. L. Brown County Clerk. During war times William Curry was clerk and his adventures and success in preserving the records will be remembered as long as the county lasts as one of the most notable instances of official fidelity in the history of the State.

The important and responsible office of Commonwealth's Attorney has been held by Johnston Reynolds, of Lewisburg; W. H. Terrell, Warm Springs; D. A. Stoffer, R. S. Turk, and L. M. McClintic.

The attorneys who have plead at the Huntersville Bar include such names as the following, besides those already mentioned: J. Howe Peyton, General Samuel C. Blackburne, George Mayes, Andrew Dameron, Captain R. F. Dennis, J. C. Woodson, Judge Matthew Edmondson, F. J. Snyder, Judge Seig, C. P. Jones, L. H. and J. W. Stephenson, William McAllister, Judge Bailey, Governor Samuel Price, Dr. Rucker, J. W. Arbuckle, T. H. Dennis, J. T. McAllister. The resident attorneys have been Captain T. A. Bradford, Captain D. A. Stoffer, General William Skeene, H. S. Rucker, R. S. Turk, C. Osburne, C. F. Moore, N. C. McNeil, W. A. Bratton, L. M. McClintic.

The physicians who have been located Huntersville were Dr. Sexton, Dr. McClelland, Dr. Porterfield Wallace, from Rockbridge, and Dr. John Payne, of Waynesboro. Dr. Payne claimed to be sufficiently proficient in fifteen trades and occupations to make a living by any one if required to do so. So far as known Dr. George B. Moffett was the first graduate in medicine to locate in Huntersville. He came in 1843. Since then the Scott brothers, Howard & Archie, Dr. Matt Wallace, Dr. H. M. Patterson, Dr. J. M. Hamilton and Dr. S. P. Patterson have been resident physicians. The last named is the present resident physician and surgeon.

For many years a thriving business was carried on in the harness and saddlery business. First by John Haines, Esq., who employed three or four hands. After him William Fertig, who employed as many, and handsome returns were realized by both. William Fertig finally went into merchandising. The business is now in the hands of Messrs Grose, father and son.

Before the peripatetic children of Israel brought ready made clothing in our county, tailoring was a good business at Huntersville. Messrs Campbell and John and James Holden, turned out a

great deal of work. Three and four hands would be busy much of the time, especially in the fall and early winter, or when there were weddings in prospect. The shop was about where Judge Moore built his office. Weddings also gave the saddlers a goodly share of business. It was considered in good form for the bride to have a new outfit, horse, saddle and bridle. The groom would not think he had much of a chance for success, if he did not do his courting and visiting on a new saddle, all made at Huntersville.

The Haines' shop was on the corner where A. B. McComb merchandises; Fertig's, where G. W. Wagner's Hotel stands, nearly opposite the shop now conducted by the Messrs Henry Grose & Son W. H. Grose. For a long while, Blacksmithing was an excellent business, as there was so much horse-shoeing and wagon repairing to be done for the teamsters, and so few shops of any pretension anywhere near. Finley's shop stood at the intersection of the Cummings Creek and Marlinton roads. Three or four hands seemed to have it they could do. No traces of it now remains. Jack Tidd, a man of Herculean strength and physical proportions, and whose features are strikingly reproduced in the newspaper portraits of Senator Elkins, carried on the work in a large shop, that stood on the corner now occupied by H. S. Rucker's law office.

Jack Tidd was succeeded by William Dilley, whose skill as an artisan was thought to be rather remarkable.

The business is now in the hands of G. W. Ginger, and in all of its appointments, the present concern is a marked advance on anything previously established in Huntersville. For a long series of years however nothing seemed more flourishing than the Hostelry business in conjunction with salooning. One of the principal Hotels, and where the colonels usually had their headquarters was located about where the Loury store house stands. It was conducted by Williams, John Busard, John Holden, Porterfield Wallace, I. C. Carpenter and E. Campbell in succession, but was burned in the great fire of the fifties; The other hotel was located on the corner now occupied by the McClintic residence. It was on extensive and commodious building, and was flanked by a row of cottages, that were much sought after by the judges and visiting lawyers. This establishment was managed by William Gibson, John Haines and Davis Hamilton in succession, but was burned during the war, by the federal troops.

About the year 1848, license for salooning was refused by the court, and Huntersville thereupon became a place of national reputation in temperance circles for the stand taken against the saloon.

A saloonist gave a colored man a treat of newly imported spirits, under its influence he behaved rather insolently towards his widowed mistress, Mrs. Matilda Craig a lady held in highest estimation by every one. She repeated the story of her troubles to a member of the court Col. Paul McNeil and he repeated it to his associates on the bench, and to their everlasting honor they refused to legalize the sale of intoxicating drinks, and so for fifty years with a brief exception public sentiment has so far opposed the saloon interests by approving the action of the courts.

W. T. P.

Against Delay.

Gather the rose-buds while you may. Old Times is still a-flying. And this same flower that smiles to-day Tomorrow will be dying. Then be not coy, but use your time; And while you may, go marry: For having once you look your prime, You may forever tarry. - Herriek.

Quay, without specially desiring to revive plum-tree memories, might well exclaim: "Shake!" when he meets a friend these days. The Times, Philadelphia.

By carefully examining the returns, Mr. McKinley will see that Destiny got her wires crossed in a few places. - The Tribune, Detroit.

County Sketches.

XIV. THE HONEST MILLER.

The following is a posthumous fragment from the papers of John Potts, deceased:

"I, John Potts, write this in my seventy-first year, to recount some of the experiences of a life of temptation as a miller, my final victory over the flesh, and redemption from an evil habit.

"My father was a miller before me, and from my earliest recollection the mill has been a familiar place to me. The clean, white dust; the big water-wheel; the heavy wooden machinery of the mill have been with me all my life. My father taught me the business and we worked together. I remember noticing that more and more of the white dust blended in his hair until it was the same color or night and morning. When I was twenty-three, he departed this life, his being the honest miller's end, and the mill and business descended to me.

"Now I know that it pleases the world to say that all honest millers have hairy palms, and I have been made the subject of this jest more times than I have hairs on my head. I laughed myself to look when it was told me as if I had never heard it before, and to look at my palm as the I did it involuntarily. I trust that the little harmless amusement I have thus afforded heavy jokers will be laid up to my credit in the great account hereafter.

"In a certain sense I was honest. Honest is but a comparative term at best. The poet Pope made a safe assertion, or as the boys say now, a safe hit, when he said, 'An honest man's the noblest work of God,' for nobody has ever been brave enough to gainsay it. I have been honest, - for a miller; honestier than people gave me credit for being, honestier than people expected me to be, and therefore I can claim to be an honest miller. But that did not satisfy me. I wanted to be an honest man, and after a time I found it was easy if set about right.

"I have pondered on the law agent millers' tolls. The statute says he lays himself liable for damages if he exacts more toll than one gallon in the bushel. How much do they suppose the miller wants? When the bag of grain is left to be ground what does the customer care for a handful more or less. Why, if the miller would ask him he would not begrudge it. Neither would the miller hesitate to give his customer a couple of handfuls if he but mentioned it.

"They told me that millers and lawyers never served on juries. I was never anxious to serve on but one jury in my life. It was before a justice and I was anxious to have a crack at one of the parties, but he knew me and objected to me by excusing me on the grounds that I was a miller, but the jury that did get at him gave it to him worse than ever I would have dared to have done, and he was no better off by my exemption.

"After my father's death there was no one left to live with me in the old log-house on the green sod by the mill-dam, and I determined to get married. I have been told since and have come to believe that I was never a handsome man. My frame was too loosely thrown together, and my face seemed to have been slighted in the making. It looked like a face built to be sold at a popular price. At the time I was thrust into business I was in blissful ignorance that my rugged features were not calculated to attract the gentle sex, and I met with severe reverses when I tried to ruffle it in society.

"At that time it had never occurred to me that there were higher walks of life than the miller's, or that any of the girls of my acquaintance would have any objections to becoming a miller's bride. Then it was, it seemed to me, that

I but lacked an opportunity to have my pick for the asking. It was not long before I began to have some sense knocked into me, and I trust that having been thoroughly humbled, my face suits an older man, full of dealings with the world, better than a would be society man.

"I soon had my flogging and settled down to business. The last time I made an effort to shine in society I remember perfectly. At that time I was one of Miss Mary Beaufort's many admirers, and Tom Payson, the son of the man who owned the mill just below mine on Muskrat creek was another. Tom was a good looking boy, and in time he would have a mill, and so I considered him a very dangerous rival. But Miss Mary did not marry a miller; she chose a lawyer, a profession that has much in common with us millers.

"The occasion to which I refer was a strolling company's performance given in the village school-house, and everyone was there, the young courting couples sitting together, and the house just packed and jammed. I had gone by myself. Of late, girls had shown signs of great deafness when I had asked them for the pleasure of their company. There was hope in my heart. One of the features of the entertainment was the prizes to be given to the prettiest girl, the handsomest man, and the ugliest man. I knew that Mary Beaufort would get one prize and I fully believed that I would get the other. I was quite happy in my chance to submit my claims to my friends and neighbors. I was a little afraid of Tom Payson, but still I did not consider that he was in the same class with me. As for the poor wretch who would have to accept the booby prize, I had never given him a moment's consideration. How nice it would be to have the people class Mary and me together; would it not prove to her that we were made for each other? I took very little interest in the performance until the time to cast the votes for the prizes. Then the showman said: 'Now, ladies and gentlemen, we will afford you an opportunity to settle a vexed question. You will decide who is the beauty of the evening. You will name her, and we will present her this elegant lace handkerchief. You will decide who is the handsomest man, and we will present him this valuable cane. You will decide who is the ugliest man among you, and we will present him, by way of consolation, with a prize suitable to his condition. We generally offer a prize for the homeliest girl, but our advance agent informed us that there were no ugly girls in this town. You will now nominate your candidates.'

"As I had foreseen, Mary Beaufort got the prize as the beauty. Several young men were nominated for the second prize, and I was astonished to find that no one offered my name. Tom Payson won it, and then the thought passed through my mind that I was very foolish to be sitting in a dark corner, and that it was very fortunate for Payson that I had not been put up against him.

"Then a man who had had a horse trade with me, put me in nomination for the booby prize, and nobody else being mentioned I was awarded the prize by acclamation. That was a rude awakening for me. The showman then produced the prize, which was a big goose-egg. The crowd roared with laughter, but I had the fortitude to walk up and accept it.

"I took that goose-egg home, and withdrew from society, attending strictly to business, and I kept the goose-egg to be used in my business. I removed the contents and used the shell as a measure to take that much from every grist brought to my mill, over and above my lawful tolls. I could fill a garner in a short time with it, and often when I filled it to the brim I would say to myself, 'Here's to the good people of Milton who presented me with this little token to be used against themselves.'

"I kept the goose-egg for years, and a very valuable gift it proved to be. It was eventually broken, and then I had to use my hands. I was resting under no greater suspicion than other millers, but there was a time when I was accused in court of stealing, not bread, but water. It is possible that I have stolen in my forty-odd years of milling some 12,000 bushels of grain. I wish to confess this. The thefts were small and are out of date in the courts of this world, but time, which bars our sins here, brings them on post-haste to the day of judgment. I was never disturbed by the law. I think I was regarded as a good citizen and a useful man. I made money, and I think I might have married well, but I did not marry. I once ran for office and got thirty votes in the county, but I can explain that. Not that they liked me less but my opponent more. If they had not voted for Wilkins they would have voted for me. Dozens of them told me this and asked me to run again. I intended to do so but was too busy. I told my friends that I had run once and if they neglected to vote for me they could not blame me for not putting myself up again.

"I will explain how I got into court for stealing water. Tom Payson finally inherited the mill below me, and he told lies on me. I would have been delighted to have divided the patronage of the neighborhood with him peaceably, but he must try and steal my custom. We were not very friendly except when we met.

"In 1857 there was a big flood caused by a water-spout, and Muskrat Creek gutted both our mills. The stream was small and the mills were built near it. Payson said he would reft on a smaller scale and arrange so that his mill could be run on a low tide in the water. I heard about it and determined to build for a big tide, and I put in bigger machinery and a very large mill-dam. Payson had no dam at all and depended on the natural tide in the creek. The next summer came and we both were eager to make all the money we could to pay for our outlay for repairs.

"Then I shut off the water from Payson's mill. I would gather a head and run my big mill at a great rate and Payson could only grind when I ground, and not one-third as fast. The word got out in the county that Payson could only grind when Potts would let him. "One morning I went to the mill and started the machinery. There came a crashing sound and my big overshot water-wheel fell down. Someone had sawed it so that the weight of the water crushed it. I thought Payson had done it. I started to repair, and in the meantime I would let the water fill my dam and then opening all the gates cause a four-foot flood in the little valley below. Payson could not grind at all. "Mothers would not let their boys play on the stream for fear of a Potts flood, and I drowned a venerable preacher who was crossing the stream at the wrong time. "Payson went to law about it and I came to find out a lot of Yankees in New England had been trying the same game for years and years, at different times and the law had decided that they had no right to interrupt the flow of the stream in this way, and I had the pleasure of paying the cost and being restrained from interfering with Payson's grinding. "As time went on I grew anxious about my many small sins, and four years ago I sold my mill and became an honest man. I hope I have not repented too late. "There is an old contraband of mine a wealthy farmer, whose grinding I did for forty years. He never took as much as a grist to another mill. His loyalty will be rewarded. I calculate I must have stolen 1600 bushels of grain from him, by a rough estimate. I am leaving him \$2,000 in my will as part payment of this debt. None of my customers missed the grain; may they not miss me in the trough."